

Management Response Follow-up to Evaluations

Overview of different practices across UN agencies and other multilateral organisations

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This document reflects the practices and strategies reported by the following 13 organisations (UN agencies and other multilateral organisations): Gavi, the Global Fund, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, WIPO, and the World Bank Group. It also includes insightful perspectives from several evaluation experts that were interviewed, including members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet). We are grateful for their time and valuable contributions to this document.

Acronyms

AMRS	Automated Management Response System (ILO)
CET	Centralised Evaluation Team (Gavi)
CODE	Committee of Development Effectiveness (WBG)
CPD	Country Programme Document (UNFPA)
CPF	Country Programming Framework (FAO)
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EAC	Evaluation Advisory Committee (Gavi, ILO)
EMR	Evaluation Management Response
EO	Executive Office
EvLU	Evaluation and Learning Unit (Gavi)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FR	Follow-up Report
IAOC	Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (WIPO)
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group (WBG)
IFC	International Finance Corporation (WBG)
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOD	Internal Oversight Division
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network
MAR	Management Action Record (WBG)
MEL	Measurement, Evaluation and Learning (Gavi)
MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (WBG)
MR	Management Response
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBAC	Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (WHO)
PC	Programme Committee (FAO)
PPC	Programme and Policy Committee (Gavi)
PRIMA	Project Information and Management Application (PRIMA)
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis (software)
TPM	Team Performance Metrics (Gavi)
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WBG	World Bank Group
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

Executive summary

The review presented in this report was conducted in the context of an internship project within the Measurement, Evaluation & Learning Department at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and in collaboration with the *École de Santé Publique de l'Université de Montréal* (ESPUM).

In response to Gavi's 2015-2016 MOPAN assessment, which highlighted the lack of a clear accountability system to ensure management responses and follow-up (1), Gavi's Centralised Evaluation Team (CET), within the Evaluation and Learning Unit (EvLU), has been working on enhancing its processes to systematically track and report on the implementation of actions included in management responses (MRs) to its governing bodies, as required by the norms and standards set by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) Network on Development Evaluation (2,3).

The project aimed to document the practices of comparable multilateral organisations regarding the follow-up of the implementation of evaluation recommendations. The specific objectives of this project were:

- To describe how other multilateral organisations involved in development assistance:
1. Ensure the systematic follow-up of the implementation of evaluation recommendations;
 2. Report to governing bodies and to the public on the implementation of evaluation recommendations;
 3. Document the use of evaluations beyond the use of management responses.

This report offers an overview of the practices and strategies recommended by 13 organisations (Gavi, the Global Fund¹, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, WIPO, and the World Bank Group) to ensure systematic follow-up and reporting of the implementation of management responses.



¹ The Global Fund has recently established their new independent evaluation and learning function and were developing their new evaluation policy and processes at the time of the interviews. Hence, this report doesn't include documentation on their practices. However, the participants from Global Fund provided key insights on management response processes and on strategies that improve the follow-up to evaluation recommendations.

The data collection consisted of a desk review of more than 60 key documents (evaluation policies, guidelines, annual reports, etc.) from these organisations, and 14 semi-structured interviews with 19 key informants. The data from the desk review and the interviews were triangulated and analyzed using the QDA Miner software.

This external report was produced in the spirit of mutual learning and collaboration within the UNEG and OECD DAC Evaluation networks, with the intention that it would be useful to other organisations seeking to improve their management response practices. This version only includes general findings and recommendations, as the specific findings and recommendations specific to Gavi are further detailed in an internal report intended for its governing bodies and senior management team.

General findings on management response practices

Table 1 provides an overview of UNEG and OECD DAC Norms and Standards on management responses (2,3).

Table 1: UNEG and OECD-DAC Norms and Standards on management responses

Development of a management response to evaluation
A mechanism must be in place to ensure that there are management responses for each evaluation.
Recommended timeframes for completing management responses are not specified.
Management responses should be publicly accessible (UNEG).
Follow-up on the implementation of actions included in management responses
Ensuring follow-up is the responsibility of management (UNEG).
A mechanism ² must be in place to ensure follow-up on the implementation of the actions provided in MRs.
Recommended timeframes for following up on implementation are not specified.
Reporting on the implementation of EMR actions and on other evaluation evidence use
A periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations should be presented to the governing bodies and/or the head of the organisation (UNEG).

Tables 2 to 7 present a high-level summary of the findings on practices of the organisations included in the sample.

Table 2: Development of a management response to evaluation recommendations.

Org.	MRs are required for all evaluations	Use of a digital platform for documenting and tracking MRs
FAO	Yes	No
Gavi	Only for centralised evaluations ³ .	No
ILO	Yes	Yes (except for high-level evaluations)
IOM	Yes	Yes (for decentralised evaluations only)
UNAIDS	Only for corporate evaluations	No
UNFPA	Yes	Yes
UNHCR	Yes	No
UNICEF	Yes	Yes
WFP	Yes	Yes
WHO	Yes	Yes
WIPO	Yes	Yes
WBG	Only for evaluations presented to CODE	No

² Such as follow-up reports or tracking systems.

³ Gavi's Evaluation Policy requests Evaluation Management Responses for all centralised and decentralised evaluations. However, in practice, it is currently only done for centralised evaluations.

Table 3: Development of a management response to evaluation recommendations.

Org.	Timelines to complete MR	MRs are made public
FAO	4 weeks after request from the Evaluation Office	Yes
Gavi	60 working days after completion of the evaluation	Yes
ILO	6-12 weeks after completion of the final report	Yes
IOM	2 months after publication of the final report	Yes
UNAIDS	3 months after submission of the final report	Yes
UNFPA	6 weeks after submission of the final report	Yes
UNHCR	90 days after completion of the final report	Yes
UNICEF	90 days after evaluation is considered final as per Evaluation Office	Yes
WFP	1-2 months after the final report is issued	Yes
WHO	6 months after publication of the final report	Yes
WIPO	10 working days after request from the Evaluation Office	Yes
WBG	6 weeks after completion of the final report	Yes

Table 4: Follow-up on the implementation of management responses.

Org.	Coordination of MR Follow-up	Frequency and duration of MR Follow-up
FAO	Office of Evaluation	Once after 1 year (project and country) Once after 2 years (thematic and strategic)
Gavi	Centralised Evaluation Team (CET), within the Evaluation and Learning Unit (EvLU)	Every six months until all actions closed (maximum of 5 years) (new)
ILO	Evaluation Office	Every 4-6 months until all actions closed (for evaluations presented to ILO's EAC only)
IOM	Director of the Department of Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance	After 6-10 months and after 12-15 months
UNAIDS	Evaluation Office	After 6 months and after 1 year
UNFPA	Policy, Strategic Information & Planning Branch (Policy & Strategy)	Once per month until all actions closed (maximum of 5 years)
UNHCR	Senior Executive Team (centralised) or Division of Strategic Planning and Results (decentralised)	After 1 year and after 2 years
UNICEF	Evaluation Office	Every quarter for up to 1 year
WFP	Corporate Planning & Performance Division	Every 6 months until all actions closed
WHO	Senior Advisor, Organizational Learning (Director-General's Office)	Ongoing until all actions closed
WIPO	Internal Oversight Division (IOD)	Every quarter until all actions closed
WBG ⁴	Joint coordination between WBG management and the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) ⁵	Once a year (for a maximum of 4 years) ⁶

Table 5: Dashboards displaying the implementation status of management responses⁷.

Org.	Consolidation of recommendations ⁸	Internal Dashboard	External Dashboard
FAO	No	No	No
Gavi	No	No	No
ILO	No	Yes	No
IOM	No	Planned	No
UNAIDS	No	Yes	No
UNFPA	No	Yes	No
UNHCR	Yes	Yes	No
UNICEF	No	Yes	No
WFP	No	No	No
WHO	Yes	Yes	Yes
WIPO	Yes	No	No
WBG ⁴	No	NA	NA

⁴ WBG reports on progress towards intended outcomes of the recommendations, rather than on the implementation of actions.

⁵ Joint coordination between the World Bank Group (IFC, World Bank and MIGA) management units and the IEG.

⁶ Tracking starts in the next fiscal year after the finalization of an evaluation.

⁷ Dashboards displaying the implementation status in proportions (%) e.g., implemented, underway, not started.

⁸ Consolidation of recommendations with other sources of recommendations e.g., audits.

Table 6: Reporting on the implementation of actions included in management responses.

Org.	Reporting to GB and/or EO on MR implementation	MR implementation in Annual Evaluation Reports	Update on individual MR implementation on public website
FAO	Yes	No	Yes
Gavi	Yes (new)	Yes (new)	No
ILO	Yes	Yes	Yes
IOM	Planned	Planned	Yes
UNAIDS	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNFPA	Yes	Yes	No
UNHCR	Planned	Planned	No
UNICEF	Yes	Yes	No
WFP	Yes	Yes	No
WHO	Yes	Yes	Yes
WIPO	Yes	Yes	No
WBG ⁶	Yes	Yes ⁹	Yes

Table 7: Reporting on the use of evaluation evidence beyond management responses.

Org.	How evaluation evidence use beyond MRs is reported
ILO	% of corporate governance-level evaluations included in strategic debates during EAC meetings (EAC: senior management).
ILO, UNAIDS, UNHCR, WHO	Examples of use (references to evaluations in the development of strategies, programme and budget proposals, work plans, policies, frameworks, guidance).
WFP	% of WFP draft policies and draft country strategic plans which refer explicitly to evaluation evidence.
UNFPA	% of new country programme documents whose design was clearly informed by evaluation (Evaluation function KPI no.9)
WBG	Most-viewed evaluation reports (n) and Most-viewed evaluation-related blogs (n)

These findings are further detailed in the report, which is divided into four key sections:

- Section 1: Development of a management response (MR) to evaluation recommendations;
- Section 2: Follow-up on the implementation of the actions included in the MR;
- Section 3: Reporting on the implementation of the actions included in the MR;
- Section 4: Reporting on the use of evaluation evidence beyond MRs.

Examples of management response templates, tracking systems, and dashboards are provided throughout the report and in the annexes.

⁹ The WBG EIG annual evaluation report includes a paragraph referencing the Management Action Record (MAR), but it doesn't have detailed information.

General recommendations to improve the follow-up to evaluation recommendations

The strategies most frequently mentioned by participants for improving the follow-up on the implementation of management responses were:

1	To report on the implementation of management responses to governance, to senior management, and to the public.
2	To engage implementing stakeholders early in the evaluation process and to organize workshops to validate/co-develop recommendations with them (to foster ownership).
3	To promote examples of evaluation evidence use (e.g., in annual evaluation reports).
4	To consolidate evaluation recommendations with recommendations from other sources e.g., recommendations from internal and external audits, previous evaluations, etc.
5	To provide updates on the implementation of management responses during governance and/or leadership meetings.
6	To implement a digital tracking system that sends automatic reminders.
7	To set up a dashboard that is linked to the tracking system and allows visibility on the implementation of management responses.
8	To assign the coordination of the MR implementation follow-up to another department (e.g., in charge of strategic planning and performance).
9	To include the MR implementation follow-up in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
10	To incorporate evaluation recommendations and their associated actions into existing corporate planning and programming systems.



Introduction

The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) *Norms and Standards for Evaluation* landmark document (2,4) represents the key guidance for evaluation units within the UN system, including affiliated organisations, on basic principles and best practices in managing, conducting, and using evaluations. Multilateral organisations involved in development assistance also commit to the norms and standards of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) Network on Development Evaluation (3,5).

Norm no.2 of the *UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation* pertains to the utility of the evaluation and requires that there is a clear intention to use the findings, conclusions, and recommendations to objectively inform decisions and actions when commissioning and conducting an evaluation (2). The usefulness of evaluation evidence in influencing decision-making is one of the *OECD DAC Principles for Evaluation of Development Assistance*. Evaluation findings need to be relevant, accessible, and available at the appropriate time (3).

To ensure the use of evaluation evidence and accountability, both guidance documents require a formal and systematic management response and follow-up to evaluation recommendations (UNEG Standard 1.4; OECD DAC Evaluation Quality Standard 4.2) (Annex A). This important tool allows for management, i.e., relevant implementing stakeholders, to indicate whether they agree, partially agree, or disagree with each recommendation. They are also required to indicate which actions they intend to put in place to adequately address each recommendation that is agreed upon and partially agreed upon (2).

Additionally, both guidance documents require the implementation of all actions indicated in management responses to be tracked and reported. As per UNEG Standard 1.4, management is responsible for the follow-up of the implementation of the actions addressing the evaluation recommendations (2,3). It is important to note that the UNEG and OECD DAC standards do not specify timeframes for completing management responses and for tracking their implementation.

Formal and systematic processes to ensure management responses and follow-up on their implementation are key to foster accountability for results, informed decision-making and organisational learning (2). It is important to note that beyond management responses, there are other tools and strategies that are utilised to promote and showcase the use of evaluation evidence (2,3).

Management response processes in the UN system

In 2016, a UNEG Working Group conducted the *Evaluation Use in the UN System* study (6). This paper highlighted gaps across the UN system in the systematic follow-up to evaluation recommendations. Although more than 80% of participants agreed that this follow-up was a key factor of evaluation evidence use, only 50% reported that a process was in place to ensure tracking of the implementation of the management response. And although about 70% agreed that senior management and governing bodies reviewed management responses, under 50% reported that evaluation evidence was discussed at senior management and governance meetings. This study does not mention if senior management or governing bodies were informed on the progress of the implementation of management responses. Another important finding of this study was that while producing a management response to evaluations is mandatory in all UN agencies, follow-up is not mandatory for many of them. Overall, practices for tracking and reporting on the implementation of management responses, and on the use of evaluation evidence in general, vary greatly between UN agencies (6).

In 2019, UNEG produced a follow-up paper, *Evaluation Use in Practice* (7), providing an overview of practices shared by members of UNEG's Interest Group on Evaluation Use (EUIG): FAO, GEF, IAEA, WFP, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, and WIPO. The review reported that the organisations were not systematically producing management responses for all evaluations. However, they were all at least ensuring that management responses were completed for strategic evaluations. Also, some agencies use electronic tracking systems to improve their follow-up on the actions included in the MRs. The paper indicates that the accessibility of these systems increases the likelihood of evaluation recommendations feeding into corporate decision-making (7). Moreover, although most agencies report on the implementation of evaluation recommendations to their governing bodies and senior management, it is not the case for all agencies included in the sample. Finally, this paper highlights that there are differences in the frequency of the follow-up on implementation, and in the level of engagement between the evaluation office and implementing partners (from self-report from management to reviewing the quality of the evidence provided on progress and organizing meetings to discuss it). An interesting practice that is mentioned in this study is that UNESCO and IAEA consolidate evaluation recommendations with recommendations from internal and external audits (7).

Management responses processes in the broader development community

Outside of the UN system, another study was also conducted in 2014 by EuropeAid on the evidence uptake from strategic evaluations (8). This study revealed that OECD DAC member agencies were not satisfied with their management responses processes, and even less with their processes (or lack thereof) for following up and reporting on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. It was also mentioned that a year of tracking implementation was too short, but that if it were extended over a period that was too long, there was an increased risk of the process becoming like a "tick box" operation. Furthermore, the lack of clarity on who is ultimately responsible for the follow-up on the implementation of management responses was identified as an important obstacle. An interesting recommendation resulting from this study was to assign a senior manager as the "owner" of the management response at the beginning of the evaluation process (8).

Management response processes in Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

In response to Gavi's 2015-2016 MOPAN assessment, which highlighted the lack of a clear accountability system to ensure management responses and follow-up (1), Gavi's Centralised Evaluation Team (CET), within the Evaluation and Learning Unit (EvLU), has been working on enhancing its processes to systematically track and report on the implementation of actions included in management responses (MRs) to its governing bodies.

Purpose and objectives:

An internship project in collaboration with the *École de Santé Publique de l'Université de Montréal* (ESPUM) presented an opportunity to document the mechanisms used by other multilateral organisations to systematically track and report on the implementation of evaluation recommendations, and to inform future decisions aiming to improve Gavi's practices.

The specific objectives of this project were:

To describe how other multilateral organisations involved in development assistance:

1. Ensure the systematic follow-up of the implementation of evaluation recommendations;
2. Report to governing bodies and to the public on the implementation of evaluation recommendations;
3. Document the use of evaluations beyond the use of management responses.

Two important areas of interest for Gavi were to learn how other organisations engage senior leadership in their management response processes, and if other organisations have consolidated systems that integrate evaluation recommendations with those from other sources e.g., audits.

This document reflects practices and strategies reported by comparable multilateral organisations in the follow-up and reporting of evaluation recommendations.

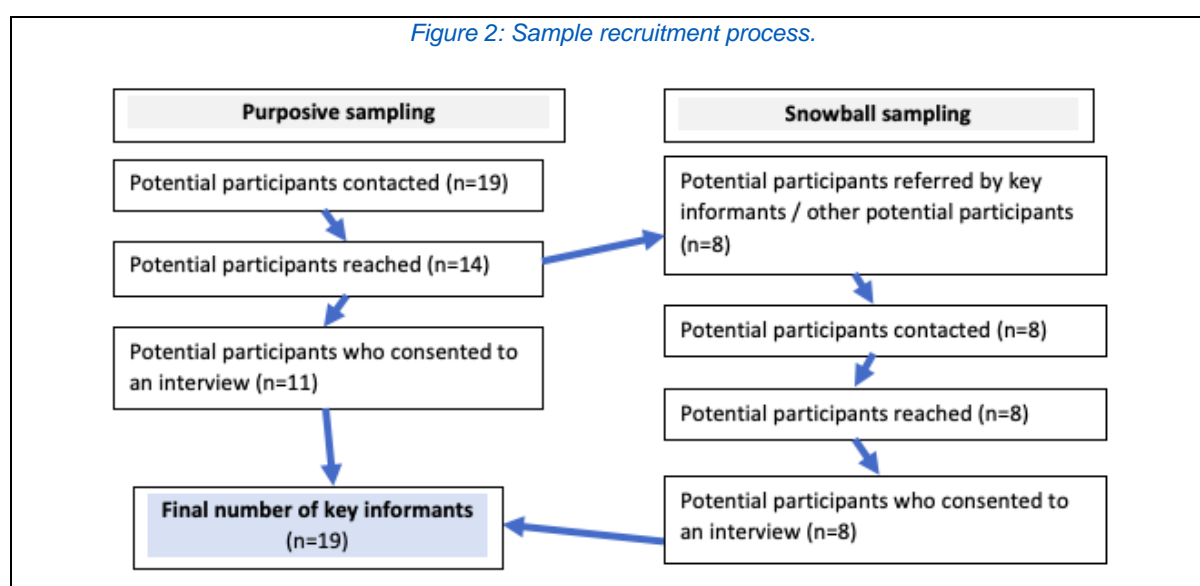
Methodology

Sampling

The recruitment of participants was done by purposive and snowball sampling methods. In total, 15 organisations, primarily Gavi Alliance partners and UNEG members, were contacted. Experts from evaluation units of 13 organisations¹ accepted to participate (Figure 1). It is also important to note here that a key informant from OECD DAC was also considered in the sample and interviewed to obtain general perspectives on norms and standards.



The diagram presented in Figure 2 summarizes the recruitment process.



Data collection

For data collection, two methods were combined: a desk review and qualitative semi-structured interviews (key informant interviews). The desk review included a total of 67 key relevant documents: evaluation policies, evaluation operation guidelines, evaluation guidance, evaluation strategy, and evaluation function annual reports. For the interviews, a semi-structured interview questionnaire (Annex A) was created, based on questions used in similar reviews: *Evaluation Use in Practice (7)* and *Evaluation Use in the UN System: Conclusions from the Data (6)*. In total, 14 interviews were conducted with a total of 19 key informants.

Ethics

Informed consent was obtained before starting the recording and transcription of the interview. To ensure confidentiality, recordings and transcripts were kept in secure private folders on Gavi's SharePoint, and files were to be deleted upon completion of the project. Individual verbatims were shared with the participants after the interviews, to allow them to validate the content and comment further if needed. The quotes included in the paper are relevant to the theme of the respective sections and are not attributed to the organisations mentioned in the surrounding paragraphs. Consent was sought to associate a quote with an organisation. Hence, when consent was not obtained, the quotes were kept as being anonymous. These practices are in line with the principles of respect, transparency, and confidentiality (9).

Data analysis

A one-page summary of the MR process for each organisation was created based on the information from the desk review. This information was then triangulated with the information obtained in the key informant interviews. Verbatims were analyzed using the QDA Miner qualitative data analysis software. Please refer to Annex C for the codes used in the data analysis.

Co-creation of recommendations

Results were shared with Gavi's Centralised Evaluation Team (CET), so that the team could co-create provisional recommendations intended for its governing bodies and senior management team¹⁰.

¹⁰ Specific findings and recommendations specific to Gavi are further detailed in the internal version of this report.

Findings

Presentation of the findings

The findings are divided into four key sections:

- Section 1: Development of a management response (MR) to evaluation recommendations;
- Section 2: Follow-up on the implementation of the actions included in the MR;
- Section 3: Reporting on the implementation of the actions included in the MR;
- Section 4: Reporting on the use of evaluation evidence beyond MRs.

This external version of this report only includes general findings and recommendations, as the specific findings and recommendations specific to Gavi are further detailed in an internal report intended for its governing bodies and senior management team.

Considerations:

There are structural and operational differences between organisational contexts and respective evaluation units that are important to consider when looking at the different practices e.g., the position of the evaluation office within an organisation's structure and its reporting lines¹¹ (Tables 8-9).

Table 8: Organisational location of the central evaluation function.

Organisational location	Organisations
External evaluation units	UNAIDS, WBG
Internal ¹² evaluation units, located <u>apart from other units</u> ¹³	FAO, Global Fund, ILO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO
Internal evaluation units, co-located <u>with other units</u>	Gavi (within Measurement, Evaluation & Learning) IOM (within Strategic Planning & Organizational Performance) WIPO (within Internal Oversight Division)

Table 9: Reporting lines of the central evaluation function.

Reporting Lines	Organisations
Directly reporting to a Governing Body (GB) <u>and</u> to the Executive Office (EO)	FAO, Gavi, Global Fund, ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, WIPO
Directly reporting to a Governing Body (GB) <u>or</u> to the Executive Office (EO)	IOM (EO), UNAIDS (GB), WBG (GB), UNICEF (EO),

Moreover, the evaluation function is either centralised at headquarters (HQ), or has a central centralised function at HQ-level with a decentralised evaluation function at the regional and/or country level (10) (Table 10).

Table 10: Structure of the evaluation functions (centralised/decentralised).

Structure of evaluation functions	Organisations
Central evaluation function (HQ) only <u>without</u> a decentralised evaluation function (Regional/Country)	Gavi ¹⁴ , Global Fund ¹⁴ , UNAIDS, WIPO and WBG
Central evaluation function (HQ) <u>with</u> a decentralised evaluation function (Regional/Country)	FAO, ILO, IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

¹¹ As per UNEG Norm no.4, evaluation units should report directly to an organisation's governing body and/or the executive head (2).

¹² Internal units i.e., located within the organisational structure e.g., the Secretariat structure.

¹³ Located apart from oversight, policy, management, planning and/or monitoring units.

¹⁴ Gavi and the Global Fund do not have country offices.

Section 1: Development of a management response to evaluation recommendations

Scope for the development of management responses

Most organisations consulted request a formal management response to each evaluation. Alternatively, the World Bank Group (WBG) Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) requires that management responses are prepared only for the evaluations that are presented to the Committee of Development Effectiveness (CODE) (11), while the UNAIDS Evaluation Office only requests management responses for corporate evaluations, as recommendations from country program evaluations are usually integrated into the next planning cycle (12). As per Gavi's Evaluation Policy (13), management responses are to be requested for all centralised and decentralised evaluations. However, in practice, Gavi currently only has a process in place to request and oversee management responses from centralised evaluations. Gavi's Evaluation and Learning Unit (EvLU) plans to expand its processes to ensure that management responses are also produced and tracked for decentralised evaluations as well.

Timelines for the development of management responses

The maximum time allotted to management to produce a management response following the finalization of an evaluation varies between the organisations included in the sample (Figure 3; Table 11).

It is important to note that UNEG and OECD DAC standards do not specify timeframes for completing management responses.

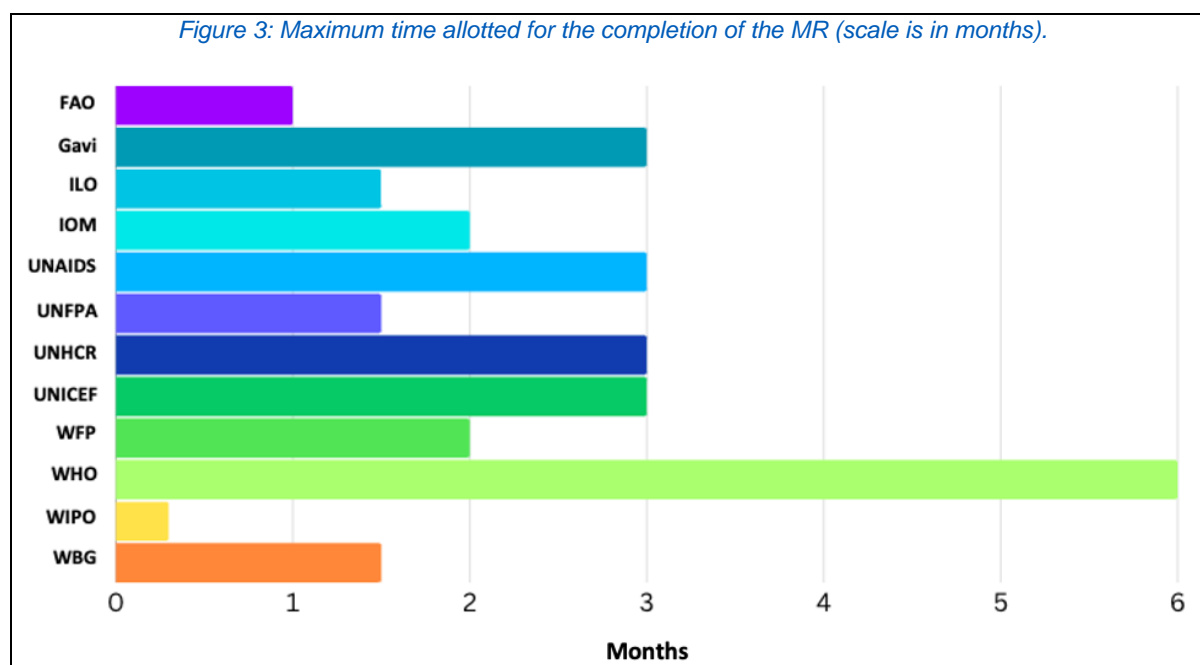


Table 11: Timelines to complete the management response.

Organisation	Timeline to complete the management response
FAO	4 weeks maximum to complete after the request from the Office of Evaluation ¹⁵ .
Gavi	To be prepared and signed off by the primary user, i.e., implementing stakeholder, within 60 working days after the completion of an evaluation.
ILO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be <u>initiated</u> by EVAL (Evaluation Office) within 3 weeks after the completion of the evaluation report. To be completed within 3 weeks from the notification by EVAL. Two reminders are sent: 1st after 3 weeks of non-response; 2nd after an additional 3 weeks of non-response.
IOM	Maximum of 2 months after the publication of the evaluation report.
UNAIDS	Maximum of 3 months of the submission of an evaluation report.
UNFPA	Maximum 6 weeks of the submission of the evaluation report.
UNHCR	Maximum 90 days following the completion of the evaluation report.
UNICEF	Maximum 90 days once the evaluation is considered final by the Evaluation Office.
WFP	Within 1-2 months after the final evaluation report is issued.
WHO	Usually within six months after publication of the final report.
WIPO	Usually 10 working days.
WBG	Usually 6 weeks after the finalization of the evaluation report.

Documentation of management responses

Management response templates that were consulted in this review all include the essential components indicated in UNEG Standard 1.4: whether management agrees, partially agrees, or disagrees; specific actions that will be taken; stakeholder(s) responsible for implementation; and the deadline for the action to be completed (2).

Management responses should include actions that substantially address agreed recommendations, and that are also are concrete, realistic, and anchored in the context.

"I think that it's important not to take these management responses as an additional planning system, as a parallel planning system that we already have [...] Strategic operational plans are institutionalised, so the evaluation management response should not become parallel planning. And that always requires understanding and working to make sure that they [management] really see what is key, what can change, what are few prioritized elements to work on. Otherwise, it becomes a duplication of planning. And I don't think it's the point of those responses."

-Evaluation Expert, UNAIDS

Examples of MR templates are available in Annex D. WIPO also requires a closing criterion i.e., a clear criteria that determines objectively if a recommendation can be considered implemented or closed (14).

Alternative practice: action-focused vs. results-oriented

The WBG stepped away from being action-focused to now being results-oriented. Since its Management Action Record (MAR) reform of 2020, the IEG requires WBG management to indicate whether they agree or disagree with recommendations, but action plans are no longer requested. Subsequent reporting focuses on the broad progress toward outcomes (15,16). This will be further covered in the next section.

¹⁵ For thematic and strategic evaluations that will be presented to the Programme Committee (PC), the MR must be completed at least 12 weeks prior to the next PC meeting.

Most of the organisations consulted use digital platforms for management to complete their management responses to evaluations. For example, UNICEF also uses a digital platform on which management responses are uploaded and then followed up on, the Global Evaluation Management Response Tracking System (17).

Email reminders can be sent via some of these digital platforms. In ILO's Automated Management Response System (AMRS), up to two reminders to complete the management response are sent to the system administrator: once after three weeks of non-response and a second and final reminder after an additional three weeks of non-response (18). In WHO's new Consolidated Platform, three email reminders are sent in progressive order based on a pre-scheduled due date. These platforms also allow tracking of the implementation of the actions included in the MRs. Digital platforms and follow-up of management responses will be further covered in the next section.

Organisations that do not use digital platforms for completing and updating management responses ask management to complete an MR template in a Word or Excel document format, usually sent over email. Alternatively, FAO's Office of Evaluation uses Google Forms to ask management to complete the MR template, while the IOM's Central Evaluation Unit is currently setting up Microsoft Forms within Microsoft Teams for their centralised evaluations¹⁶.

It is important to ensure that actions indicated in management responses are incorporated in the systems used by management for planning and implementing.

Making the management responses available to the public

All organisations that were consulted publish their evaluation reports and their management responses on their public website. This is in line with UNEG Norm no. 7 (Transparency) and UNEG Standard no. 1.5 (Disclosure policy) which require that all key evaluation products, including evaluation reports and management responses, should be made publicly accessible for public accountability (2). Table 12 presents where the management responses are located on the public websites of the organisations included in this sample (as of July 2023). Management responses can usually be retrieved by locating the final evaluation report on the website.

Table 12: Location of management responses on organisational public websites.

Org.	Publication of management responses
FAO	Evaluation at FAO > Completed Evaluations (alongside final evaluation report)
Gavi	Gavi - Evaluation studies (alongside final evaluation report)
ILO	ILO's i-eval Discovery
IOM	IOM Evaluation Webpage > Evaluation Repository
UNAIDS	UNAIDS Evaluation Office > Evaluation Reports (alongside final evaluation report)
UNFPA	UNFPA – Evaluation > Evaluation Database (alongside final evaluation report)
UNHCR	UNHCR Evaluation Office > Explore our Evaluations
UNICEF	Evaluation in UNICEF > Explore our Evaluations (alongside final evaluation report)
WFP	Independent Evaluation WFP (alongside final evaluation report)
WHO	WHO - Evaluation
WIPO	WIPO – Evaluations (at the end of each final evaluation report)
WBG	Management Action Record (MAR) Reports (available in October 2023) ¹⁷

¹⁶ IOM's digital system PRIMA can only be used for their decentralised evaluations.

¹⁷ In 2019-2020, IEG and WBG reformed the annual Management Action Record (MAR) process. The first IEG annual MAR report since the reform will be available in October 2023.

Other practices related to the development of management responses

As per FAO's evaluation policy, an evaluation report cannot be published without its MR (19,20). This was reported as a strong incentive that would ensure the completion of the MR. Another incentive that FAO uses is that management, i.e., implementing stakeholders, are responsible for presenting their management responses and follow-up reports to their Programme Committee (PC) during PC meetings, for thematic and strategic evaluations that are to be reported to the PC (20).

Alternative practice: considering behavioural insights

WIPO's evaluation unit considers behavioural insights in all phases of the evaluation process. This approach acknowledges that there are behavioural barriers, such as lack of engagement or reluctance to change, that may affect the evaluation process itself or the subsequent implementation of evaluation recommendations. Hence, the evaluation team takes in consideration stakeholders' motives and perspectives, and highlights how they can benefit from the evaluation and from the recommendations (14). WIPO's use of behavioral insights throughout the evaluation process (including during the implementation of the management response) is further detailed in this document: *Evaluation of the Use and Impact of IOD Evaluation Section Recommendations* (14).

Section 2: Follow-up on the implementation of actions included in management responses

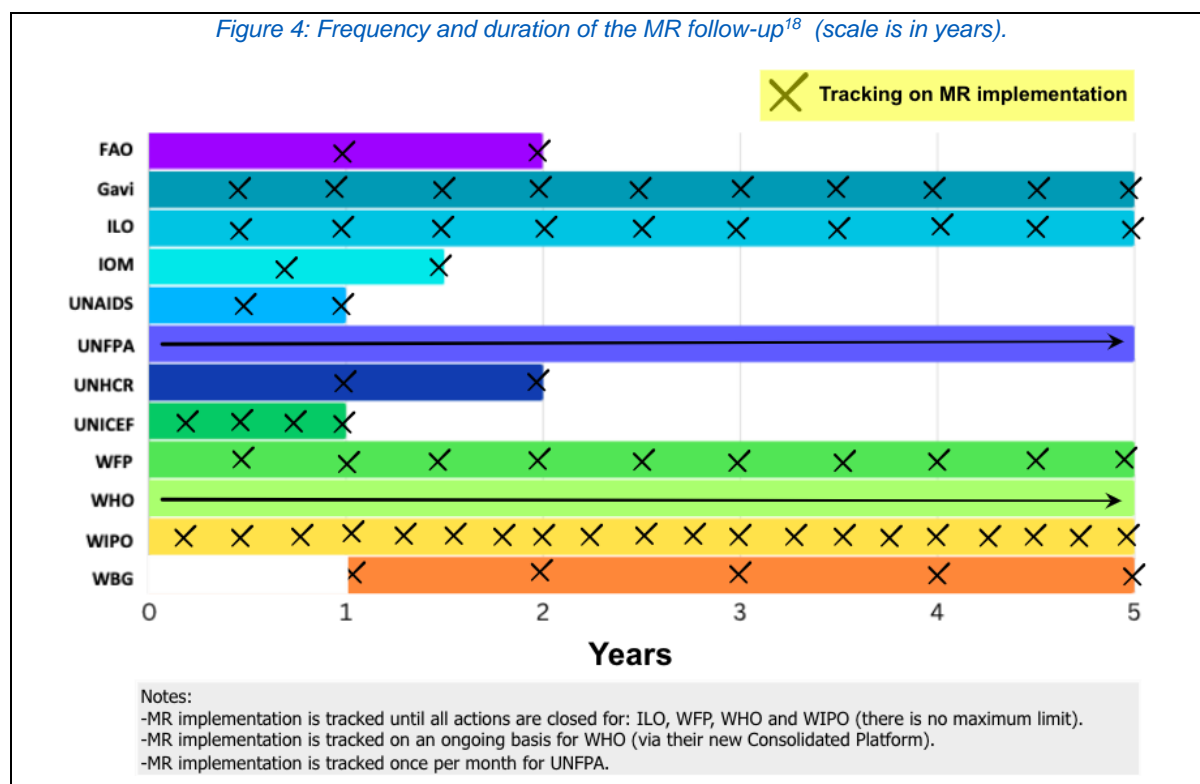
Timelines for following up on management responses

The frequency and duration of the follow-up on the implementation of the management response vary between organisations included in the sample (Figure 4; Table 13), regardless of whether the coordination of this follow-up was done by the evaluation office or not. Some organisations justified a shorter follow-up period, mentioning that ensuring implementation primarily falls under the responsibility of the implementing units. For other organisations, a longer follow-up period was preferred to ensure all actions were completed, considering potential delays due to the context not being as conducive as planned.

“Some recommendations require political momentum. And if you don't have that political momentum, the recommendation won't be implemented. It depends also on the leadership, the direction the organisation is going, the environment and the context in which we are. And sometimes it's not that managers do not want to implement, and that the recommendation is a bad recommendation. Sometimes it's the timing. It's not the right one, but keeping the recommendation is also important because you don't want people to forget that there is something that needs to be changed.”

- Anonymous

It is important to note that UNEG and OECD DAC standards do not specify timeframes for tracking the implementation of management responses i.e., frequency and duration.



¹⁸ Status as of July 2023.

Table 13: Frequency and duration of the MR follow-up

Organisation	Frequency and duration of the MR follow-up
FAO	Project and country evaluations: once after 1 year Thematic and strategic evaluations: once after 2 years
Gavi	Every 6 months until all actions have been closed (for a maximum of 5 years) (new)
ILO	For high-level evaluations presented to the Evaluation Advisory Committee (internal/senior management) every 4-6 months until all actions have been closed
IOM	1st follow-up: after 6 to 10 months; 2nd follow-up: after 12 to 15 months
UNAIDS	1st follow-up: after 6 months; 2nd follow-up: after 1 year
UNFPA	Once per month until all actions have been closed (for a maximum of 5 years)
UNHCR	1st follow-up: after 1 year; 2nd follow-up: after 2 years
UNICEF	Every quarter for up to 1 year
WFP	Every 6 months until all actions have been closed
WHO	Ongoing (via the new Consolidated Platform) until all actions have been closed
WIPO	Every quarter until all actions have been closed
WBG	Once a year (for a maximum of 4 years) Tracking starts only in the next fiscal year after the finalization of the evaluation

Note: actions that are closed refer to actions that have been either implemented or canceled.

Coordination of the follow-up of management responses

Most participants mentioned that their evaluation office is usually very much involved in supporting implementing stakeholders to complete the management response so that actions are in line with the recommendations. However, once the management response is finalized, some organisations transfer the responsibility of following up on the MR implementation out of the evaluation office.

“Evaluation provides information to improve programming. You do the evidence, you want the management response because you want to make sure that something happens from it. But then there’s a point at which it’s no longer linked to the evaluation. It’s linked to the functioning of the department or the program.”

-Evaluation Expert, UNAIDS

Table 14 presents organisations from the sample where the responsibility for tracking the implementation of actions included in management responses does not fall under the evaluation office, but rather under another department.

Table 14: Coordination of the follow-up of the implementation outside of the Evaluation unit.

Org.	Responsibility
IOM	Director of the Department of Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance
UNHCR	<u>Centralised evaluations:</u> Senior Executive Team (SET) <u>Decentralised evaluations:</u> Division of Strategic Planning and Results
UNFPA	Policy, Strategic Information and Planning Branch (PSIPB), Policy & Strategy Division
WFP	Corporate Planning & Performance Division
WHO	Senior Advisor, Organizational Learning (Director-General’s Office)

In WHO, the Senior Advisor, Organizational Learning (Director-General’s Office) provides coaching and guidance to management on the completion and tracking of the implementation of management responses. This ensures a smooth transition between the evaluation phase and the operationalisation of the recommendations.

For the organisations included in this sample, when follow-up is coordinated outside of the evaluation unit, the department responsible for this coordination provides updates on the implementation of management responses to the evaluation office when requested i.e., when the evaluation office needs to prepare reports on the evaluation function, such as reports to governing bodies or annual evaluation reports. Reporting on the implementation of management responses will be covered in the next section.

As per UNEG Standard 1.4, ensuring the follow-up on the implementation of the actions included in the MR is management’s responsibility (2). In UNICEF, the progress on the implementation of management responses is reviewed by Management on a quarterly basis and reported on the Global EMR Tracking System, which the Evaluation Office oversees (17).

Documentation of the implementation of management responses

As mentioned in the previous section, most of the organisations that were consulted use digital platforms for management to complete their management responses to evaluations, and for the tracking of the implementation of the actions included in the MRs (Table 15).

Table 15: Examples of digital platforms used for management responses.

Org.	Name of digital platform	Responsibility
ILO	Automated Management Response System (AMRS) (except for high-level evaluations)	Evaluation Office
IOM	PRIMA (decentralised evaluations only)	Strategic Planning and Organizational Performance (PRIMA Unit)
UNFPA	TeamCentral	Policy & Strategy Division
UNHCR	Consolidated recommendation tracker	Inspector General’s Office (Oversight)
UNICEF	Global EMR Tracking System	Evaluation Office
WFP	Risk and Recommendation tracking tool (R2)	Corporate Planning & Performance Division
WHO	Consolidated Recommendation Tracking Platform	Director-General’s Office (Senior Advisor, Organizational Learning)
WIPO	TeamMate+	Internal Oversight Division

Email reminders can be sent via these systems. They are either automated or require prompts by the system administrator. IOM’s digital system PRIMA is used for its decentralised evaluations and generates two reminders to document the implementation of the actions: 6 months and 12 months after the upload of the evaluation report (21). However, the system cannot be used to track management responses to centralised evaluations as it cannot be attributed to a financial budget code (due to their cross-cutting scope).

For high-level evaluations presented to the ILO’s Evaluation Advisory Committee (an internal committee composed of senior management), management responses are not entered in the AMRS tracking system. However, their implementation is closely followed up every four to six months until all actions have been closed. Other evaluations are entered in the AMRS tracking system but the documentation of the implementation of actions is only done when the management response is initially completed by management (18). There is currently no subsequent follow-up done by the Evaluation office or reporting back to them regarding implementation, but the organisation wishes to set up subsequent follow-up.

Some organisations without a digital tracking platform request implementing stakeholders to document on implementation progress in columns that are included in the original management response and that are dedicated to tracking (Annex D). UNAIDS requests management to document the mid-year tracking column for the first reporting and then the

end-of-year column for the final reporting. This process is done by sending the document via email. The updated management response is then uploaded into the UNAIDS Evaluation Office Tracking system (22). Similarly, Gavi documents the implementation of management responses on an internally accessible Excel spreadsheet located on Gavi's SharePoint, the EMR ITracker (Annex D).

WHO has been using a template (Annex D) similar to that of other agencies. Until 2022, updated management responses with information on implementation status were consolidated annually into a single document that was posted on the Evaluation website. Since 2023, the information is now transferred and tracked in the new WHO Consolidated Recommendation Tracking Platform, which will be further described in the next sub-section.

For FAO and for the WBG, the follow-up on the implementation of the evaluation recommendations is documented in evaluation specific follow-up reports. FAO's Evaluation office requests one Follow-up Report (FR): one year after the MR for project and country evaluations; and two years after the MR for thematic and strategic evaluations. FRs for thematic and strategic evaluations are presented by management to the Programme Committee (PC) (20). The FAO FR template includes a tool called the Management Action Record (MAR) score, a quantitative self-assessment by responsible units of the progress made in the implementation of each fully and partially accepted recommendation, through a six-point scoring scale (Annex D) (20). As for MRs, FAO Follow-up reports are usually completed using Google Forms.

Alternative practice: action-focused vs. results-oriented

As mentioned previously in the report, the WBG is no longer action-oriented, but rather focuses on broad progress toward the intended outcomes of the recommendations. An Outcome Framework is conceptualized, which defines the expected results chain against which evidence of progress is assessed. The level of evidence is either: 1) a change in direction towards the expected outcome; 2) emerging evidence of a change towards the expected outcome; or 3) limited evidence towards the expected outcome. This progress is discussed between IEG and relevant WBG management units (custodians of the response/technical focal points) when it's time for the annual reporting on the implementation of recommendations. Management completes a self-assessment report, then IEG proceeds with a validation of the evidence provided by management (15,16). It is important to add here that if management does not provide this, this will be mentioned by the IEG in their report to the Board.

It is important to not only follow-up on the implementation of the actions included in management responses, but to also reflect on whether the implemented actions actually addressed the problems targeted by the evaluation recommendations.

"Some evaluation units are trying to experiment with second-loop learning, which is not only to monitor the recommendations, but to say [for example]: You've recommended a new policy on procurement, and they did that. Now, did that actually fix the problem?" And that's the second loop."
- Evaluation Expert, OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation

Consolidation with recommendations from other sources

UNHCR and WHO consolidate recommendations from evaluations with recommendations from other sources e.g., internal and external audits, Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reports, and other sources. In UNCHR, all recommendations from the UN Board of Auditors (BoA), the Evaluation Office (EvO), the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and from the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) appear on an internal recommendation tracking dashboard. WHO's Consolidated Recommendation Tracking Platform includes all recommendations from its governing bodies, evaluations, JIU reports, audits, Advisory Committees to the Director-General's Office and to the Governing Bodies, as well as from high-level commissions.

Likewise, WIPO's evaluation recommendations are also consolidated with recommendations from audits and investigations, as WIPO's evaluation function is part of its Internal Oversight Division (WIPO IOD) (23).

Key informants consulted reported that consolidating recommendations from different sources is a strategy that helps to identify patterns, inter-relationships and to highlight recurring and cross-cutting recommendations.

"[The consolidated platform] is a way of communicating progress. And then essentially connecting a lot of dots, identifying what [recommendations] come up again and again and again."
- Organizational Learning Expert, WHO

This means that implementing stakeholders only need to go into one electronic platform to document progress of their response to all recommendations. This strategy helps to streamline the follow-up process for all recommendations.

"The nice thing about this [digital platform used by Audit] was that it was used across the organisation for management purposes, so recommendations from evaluations were one piece of the entire puzzle. Which also connects with the planning systems, corporate systems, which helps a lot. And I think that it's a really good thing to have an automated system that helps massage evaluation within the corporate systems."

- Anonymous

Dashboards

Half of the organisations¹⁹ that were included in this review have an internal dashboard that presents quantitative data visualization on the implementation of evaluation recommendations and one organisation²⁰ is currently in the process of developing one. These dashboards display the implementation status of evaluation recommendations e.g., accepted or not accepted; open or closed; implemented, underway or not started; open-ended. There are also categorizations of the recommendations e.g., by division or department, by region, or by theme.

Per example, UNICEF's Evaluation Office has an internal dashboard that displays the proportion of evaluation reports for which a management response has been uploaded on their tracking system, and proportions on the implementation status of actions included in management responses (completed, underway, not started, still open after two years) (17).

¹⁹ ILO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO.

²⁰ IOM.

WHO has both internal and external dashboards on the implementation recommendations (from evaluations and other sources). Via two external dashboards located on their Member States Portal, information on the implementation status of recommendations is available to the public: [Tracking recommendations from the Consolidated Platform](#); and [Tracking Secretariat Implementation Plan \(SIP\) actions](#)²¹ (24,25).

Other practices related to the follow-up of management responses

Once a Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) is done, FAO's Evaluation office reviews the Country Programming Framework (CPF) that will follow to validate that recommendations have been incorporated. Furthermore, meetings between evaluation units and the implementing stakeholders to discuss the progress made on implementing evaluation recommendations can help to ensure a good follow-up. This is done by WBG IEG and WIPO's evaluation office.

"I think that the most important point is the relational part [...]. This is why I suggested that you don't treat it like an audit system but think of it as a relationship and a dialogue process. And that what you're trying to get through [...] is the dialogue, is somebody who's likely to care about the recommendations and that has not been directed to care about it by their management. It's getting the management to care about a recommendation or thinking that it's a worthwhile recommendation. [...] by having dialogue and discourse and having a mechanism to at least be able to signal to management, whether a recommendation is not working but is still important."

- Evaluation Expert, WBG IEG

Strategies that promote a systematic follow-up of evaluation recommendations

Figure 5 presents the strategies that were most frequently mentioned by the participants on how to improve the follow-up on the implementation of management responses:

- To report on the implementation of management responses to governance, to senior management, and to the public;
- To engage implementing stakeholders early in the evaluation process and to organize workshops to validate/co-develop recommendations with them (to foster ownership); and
- To promote examples of evaluation evidence use (e.g., in annual evaluation reports).

Other strategies that were reported by several participants are:

- To consolidate evaluation recommendations with recommendations from other sources e.g., recommendations from internal and external audits, previous evaluations, etc.;
- To provide updates on MR implementation during governance and/or leadership meetings.
- To implement a digital tracking system that sends automatic reminders.
- To set up a dashboard that is linked to the tracking system and allows visibility on the implementation of management responses.
- To assign the coordination of the MR implementation follow-up to another department (e.g., in charge of strategic planning and performance).
- To include the MR implementation follow-up in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- To incorporate evaluation recommendations and their associated actions into existing corporate planning and programming systems.

²¹ See Annex F.

Section 3: Reporting on the implementation of actions included in management responses

Reporting on the implementation of MRs in annual evaluation reports

As per UNEG Norms and Standards (2), a periodic report on the status of the implementation of the evaluation recommendations should be presented to the governing bodies and/or the head of the organisation. Eight organisations²² from the sample include the status of MR implementation in the organisation's annual report on the evaluation function, and three²³ are planning to do so in their next report (26–33). The reporting most often consists of a combination of quantitative data and qualitative data (narrative). Different labels to categorize the level of implementation can be used (Table 16).

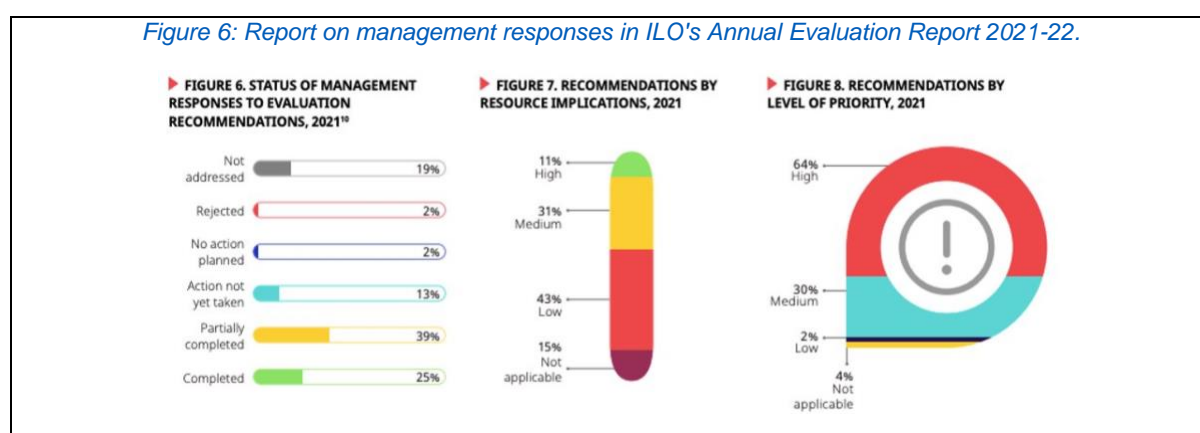
Table 16: Examples of labels used to categorize the implementation status of MRs in annual reports.

Organisation	Categories
ILO	Completed / Partially completed / Action not yet taken / No action planned / Rejected / Not addressed
UNAIDS	Not started / under development / under implementation / tracking completed
UNICEF	Completed / underway / not started

Some organisations disaggregate the implementation data further (Table 17; Figure 6).

Table 17: Presentation of implementation status data in annual reports.

Disaggregation of data by:	Examples
Implementing division or department	Governance, Human Resources, etc.
Region	Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe, and Central Asia, etc.
Priority	High, medium, or low.
Resource implication	High, medium, or low.
Time frame	Long-term, medium-term, or short-term, open-ended
Theme, category, or cross-cutting priority	Gender, environment, etc.



²² ILO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WBG, WFP, WHO, WIPO.

²³ Gavi, IOM, UNHCR.

More examples of graphs and charts displaying data on the implementation of management responses are available in Annex E.

WIPO’s Annual Report by the Director of the Internal Oversight Division (IOD) (which includes the evaluation function) also disaggregates the implementation status data by source of recommendations: External Audit, Independent Advisory Oversight Committee (IAOC), and Internal Oversight Division (IOD) (33). Other quantitative data that are represented in annual reports on the evaluation function are: timeliness of compliance with management response requirement (UNICEF) i.e., within the 90-day window or beyond (28).

The implementation of evaluation recommendations is included in evaluation performance indicators of the evaluation function for three organisations consulted (Table 18).

Table 18: Examples of how to include MR Follow-up in performance indicators of evaluation functions.

Org.	Indicators
ILO	% of MR actions completed and partially addressed
UNFPA	% of completed programme-level evaluation reports with MR submitted (KPI7) % of MR actions completed (KPI8)
UNICEF	% of MRs submitted within the 90-day window % of MR actions completed and underway

[It is important to have] *metrics that are not too strict. [...] if you say that all recommendations need to be implemented within two years [...] then what happens is that people will start pushing and putting whatever because the most important thing is the closing, not whether the recommendation was useful, effective, and efficient in producing change. [...] Maybe you don't say that we want all to be closed but maybe if we achieve 60-70%, that's already good.*
- Anonymous

Qualitative data complement the quantitative data provided on management responses and their implementation. Complementing statistics and numbers with a narrative provides a much richer story on the instrumental use of the evaluation evidence.

“People get stuck on statistics. What's really interesting is to understand, for those for which people have asked an extension, why? Also, what were the hurdles or enabling factors for addressing the recommendations and taking action? And for actions that are marked as done [...] are they really addressing the problem?” All of those things are what you learn from and what you can report on.
- Anonymous

Reporting on the implementation of management responses to a governing body and/or the head of the organisation

Nine organisations²⁴ included in this review report back on the implementation of evaluation recommendations to a governing body (e.g., Executive Board, Executive Committee, etc.) and/or to the head of the organisation and three²⁵ are planning to do so in 2023. Most participants mentioned that bringing this to the attention of governing bodies and the senior management of the organisation is key to increasing accountability.

Because there are structural and operational differences, reporting on the implementation of evaluation recommendations varies between organisations (11–14,17–22,34–46). Table 19 presents the different entities that are regularly informed about the implementation of management responses, when applicable.

²⁴ FAO, ILO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WBG, WFP, WHO, WIPO.

²⁵ Gavi, IOM, UNHCR.

Table 19: Governing bodies informed on the implementation of management responses.

Organisation	Reports on the implementation of MRs to:
Reports prepared by the Evaluation Office on the implementation of recommendations	
FAO	Programme Committee; Office of Strategy and Planning; FAO Council
Gavi	Evaluation Advisory Committee (external) (new)
ILO	Evaluation Advisory Committee (senior management – internal)
IOM	Director General (Planned for 2023)
UNAIDS, UNICEF	Executive Board
UNFPA	Executive Board (information provided by Policy & Strategy)
UNHCR	Executive Committee of the HC's Programme (Planned for 2023)
WHO	Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (PBAC)
WIPO	Oversight Committee; WIPO General Assembly
WBG	Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE)
Reports prepared by other divisions on the implementation of recommendations	
UNFPA (Policy & Strategy)	Executive Committee; Executive Board
WFP (Corporate Planning & Performance)	Executive Board

As mentioned in previous sections, FAO requests for management to present their management response and their follow-up report during a Programme Committee (for thematic and strategic evaluations) meeting (20). This practice increases accountability for follow-up on implementation. At WIPO, if there are actions in MRs that are not implemented after two years of tracking, it is possible that the Oversight Committee calls on management to explain the delay.

Reporting on the implementation of management responses to the public

As seen in the first section on the development of management responses, all organisations that were consulted publish their evaluation reports and their management responses on their public website. The *UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation* do not clearly state if follow-up documentation on the evaluation-specific implementation of recommendations is also required to be public. Table 20 presents examples of organisations (included in the sample) that not only publish their management responses, but also make the implementation status of individual management responses available to the public on their external website.

Table 20: Organisations displaying the implementation status of individual MRs on their public website

Org.	Implementation status of individual MRs made public
FAO	Follow-Up Reports (FRs) presented to the Programme Committee (PC) are posted on the FAO Programme Committee Sessions webpage.
ILO	i-eval Discovery Dashboard > Recommendations and management responses ²⁶ .
IOM	When the “implementation monitoring” section of the MR template is completed, an updated version of the MR is posted in the IOM Evaluation Repository .
UNAIDS	When the “Tracking” section of the MR template is completed, an updated version of the MR is posted in the UNAIDS Evaluation Reports section.
WHO	Up to 2022, in annual reports posted on the Organizational learning webpage. Since 2023, it is now on: Members Portal: Tracking Secretariat Implementation (SIP) actions . ²⁶

²⁶ See Annex F.

Section 4: Reporting on the use of evaluation evidence beyond management responses

Reporting on the use of evaluation evidence beyond MRs in annual evaluation reports

Management responses are one of the many strategies to ensure that evaluation evidence is used. Communication and dissemination activities, such as dissemination workshops, evaluation briefs, and webinars, are essential to promote the use of evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations. There are other ways to monitor and report on the use of evaluation evidence beyond management responses. About half of the organisations consulted include other documentation of evaluation evidence use in their annual report on the evaluation function (26,27,29,32,47–50). Some examples are presented in Table 21.

Table 21: Examples of how evaluation evidence use beyond MRs can be reported

Org.	How evaluation evidence use beyond MRs is reported
ILO	% of corporate governance-level evaluations included in strategic debates during EAC meetings (EAC: senior management).
ILO, UNAIDS, UNHCR, WHO	Examples of use (references to evaluations in the development of strategies, programme and budget proposals, work plans, policies, frameworks, guidance).
WFP	% of WFP draft policies and draft country strategic plans which refer explicitly to evaluation evidence.
UNFPA	% of new country programme documents whose design was clearly informed by evaluation (Evaluation function KPI no.9)
WBG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most-viewed evaluation reports (n) • Most-viewed evaluation-related blogs (n)

One of the criteria that are assessed by UNFPA’s Programme Review Committee when reviewing draft Country Programme Documents (CPDs) is the use of evaluation evidence. If evaluation evidence is clearly reflected in the application, a higher score is attributed. This is included in one of the nine KPIs of UNFPA’s evaluation function (KPI no. 9) (27).

Reporting on the use of evaluation evidence beyond MRs in syntheses and reviews

Many organisations, such as FAO, WFP, WHO, and the WBG, conduct syntheses and thematic reviews on a regular basis. These reports showcase recurring themes and are another way to highlight examples of evaluation evidence use. These reports are usually made available on the organisation’s public website (31,51–53).

Figure 7: Examples of syntheses and thematic reviews.



Discussion

This synthesis report aimed to highlight trends and good practices that other multilateral organisations put in place to ensure systematic follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. The insights obtained from this project complement the findings from the two UNEG reviews on evaluation use that were conducted in 2016 and 2019 (6,7).

In general, the processes for generating management responses after an evaluation are more robust and institutionalized compared to the processes for monitoring their implementation. However, there seems to be noteworthy progress to improve the follow-up of MRs in most organisations that were consulted in this project. For example, UNHCR and IOM have recently made significant changes to their evaluation policies and procedures to enhance the tracking and reporting of the implementation of management responses, and Gavi and the Global Fund are planning to do the same in 2023.

This report highlights key practices that systematize the follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations, such as: reporting on this follow-up to governing bodies and senior management, ensure this information is accessible to the public; engaging implementing stakeholders early in the evaluation process; consolidating with recommendations from other sources e.g., with audit recommendations, and incorporating in existing corporate planning and programming systems; using a digital tracking system and a dashboard; assigning the coordination of the MR implementation follow-up to another department (e.g., in charge of strategic planning and performance); and including MR implementation follow-up in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Results obtained with this project are in line with the EuropeAid study (8): there is a lack of clarity on who is responsible for the follow-up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. While UNEG Standard 1.4 mentions that management is responsible for ensuring follow-up of the implementation of the management responses (2), management's level of ownership in this exercise varies greatly between organisations. Most key informants included in this project mentioned the importance of clearly identifying the person in charge of the follow-up of the management response i.e., a MR coordinator, an "owner" of the MR. This is in line with one of the recommendations put forward by the EuropeAid study.

Furthermore, UNEG Norm no. 7 (Transparency) and UNEG Standard no. 1.5 (Disclosure policy) requires key evaluation products to be publicly available (2), but it is not stated clearly that reports on the implementation of evaluation recommendations are included. Making the implementation status of management responses publicly available is not a common practice amongst the organisations of the sample. Reporting publicly on the progress of the implementation of evaluation recommendations is an important lever that was emphasized by most participants that were included in this project.

Standardizing processes for the follow-up and reporting on the implementation of management responses, as well as for the follow-up and reporting of broader evaluation evidence use, is an important strategy to enhance the use of evaluation evidence for decision-making. This also contributes to building the evaluative thinking of implementing stakeholders, and a strong evaluation culture in an organisation (54–56). This ultimately allows organisations to be more results-oriented, and strengthen the practice of result-based management (57).

Recommendations

General recommendations of practices that promote a systematic follow-up and reporting of evaluation recommendations include:

1	To report on the implementation of management responses to governance, to senior management, and to the public.
2	To engage implementing stakeholders early in the evaluation process and to organize workshops to validate/co-develop recommendations with them (to foster ownership).
3	To promote examples of evaluation evidence use (e.g., in annual evaluation reports).
4	To consolidate evaluation recommendations with recommendations from other sources e.g., recommendations from internal and external audits, previous evaluations, etc.
5	To provide updates on the implementation of management responses during governance and/or leadership meetings.
6	To implement a digital tracking system that sends automatic reminders.
7	To set up a dashboard that is linked to the tracking system and allows visibility on the implementation of management responses.
8	To assign the coordination of the MR implementation follow-up to another department (e.g., in charge of strategic planning and performance).
9	To include the MR implementation follow-up in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
10	To incorporate evaluation recommendations and their associated actions into existing corporate planning and programming systems.

This external version intended for the UNEG and OECD DAC Evaluation networks only includes general recommendations, as the specific recommendations specific to Gavi are further detailed in an internal report intended for its governing bodies and senior management team.

Limitations

There are limitations that are important to acknowledge when considering the information presented in this report. As previously mentioned, there are structural and operational differences (e.g., degree of independence and decentralization of the evaluation function, scope and mission of the organisation, etc.). Hence, some practices that may be relevant for certain organisations may not be transferable to others. Furthermore, the overview of practices in the follow-up of management responses is limited to the practices of the organisations that were reached and included in this review. Moreover, the perspectives on the follow-up of management responses and broader evaluation evidence use are also limited to the key informants consulted, which may not reflect those of other key stakeholders in their organisation. Finally, there are also limitations related to data collection and analysis. Only one person was involved in the data collection and analysis. Hence, there are risks of interpretation bias, including confirmation bias. To mitigate these risks, a one-page summary of the management response process was completed for each organisation and each participant received the one-pager for their organisation. This was done to increase the credibility of the findings. Furthermore, key informants received two drafts to review to ensure that there were no factual errors regarding their practices. Participants from eleven organisations²⁷ reviewed and provided feedback.

²⁷ On the total of 12 organisations for which practices were reported.

Conclusion

This report offers an overview of the practices set in place by different multilateral organisations to follow up on evaluation recommendations. The desk review and key informant interviews provided findings that complement the evidence obtained by two previous UNEG studies (6,7). Using a qualitative data analysis software (QDA Miner) allowed to identify obstacles and strategies to improve the tracking and reporting on the implementation of management responses and on the use of evaluation evidence beyond MRs.

Recommended practices that improve the systematic follow-up of evaluation recommendations include: reporting on this follow-up to governing bodies and senior management, ensure this information is accessible to the public; engaging implementing stakeholders early in the evaluation process; consolidating with recommendations from other sources e.g., with audit recommendations, and incorporating in existing corporate planning and programming systems; using a digital tracking system and a dashboard; assigning the coordination of the MR implementation follow-up to another department (e.g., in charge of strategic planning and performance); and including MR implementation follow-up in Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Specific recommendations tailored to Gavi are presented and explained in the internal version of this report, which is intended for its governing bodies and senior management team. This external version is intended for the UNEG and OECD DAC Evaluation networks and was produced in the spirit of mutual learning and collaboration, with the intention that it would be useful to other organisations seeking to improve their management response practices.

As the majority of key informants interviewed for this project were from evaluation units, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study with key informants from other departments, especially with the divisions that are involved with planning and programming. This would allow to obtain their perspectives on how evaluation recommendations and their associated actions fit into the overall planning and programming of their organisation. It would also be interesting to explore if there are more systematic practices in organisations that have strong results-based management approaches in place.

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Annex A: UNEG and OECD DAC Standards

STANDARD 1.4 Management response and follow up

The organization should ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that management responds to evaluation recommendations. The mechanisms should outline concrete actions to be undertaken in the management response and in the follow-up to recommendation implementation.

30. The organization's management is responsible for providing a formal management response to each evaluation. The management response provides management's views of the evaluation recommendations, including whether and why management agrees or disagrees with each recommendation. The management response should detail specific actions to implement those recommendations that were agreed to by management. These actions should be concrete, objectively verifiable, time-bound and clear on the responsibilities for implementation.

31. The organization should have an oversight mechanism to ensure that there are management responses to evaluations, that the actions contained in management responses are adequate to substantially address agreed recommendations and that the recommendations are appropriately implemented.

32. The organization should have a mechanism to oversee the implementation of the actions provided in management responses, such as follow-up reports or tracking systems. Ensuring follow-up is the responsibility of the management. Follow-up should be overseen by the governing body or, for those actions to be undertaken by units within the organization, by management itself.

Figure 8: UNEG Standard 1.4

4.2 SYSTEMATIC RESPONSE TO AND FOLLOW-UP ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are systematically responded to and action taken by the person(s)/ body targeted in each recommendation. This includes a formal management response and follow-up. All agreed follow-up actions are tracked to ensure accountability for their implementation.

Figure 9: OECD DAC Standard 4.2

Annex B: KII Discussion Guide

QUESTIONS

1. Does your organisation have any systems or tools to track the implementation of actions emerging from EMRs?
2. Are EMRs done for all evaluations, or only certain evaluations (e.g. centralised, high-level corporate evaluations)?
3. Could you please walk me through the steps that are taken in your organisation to produce an EMR and then to follow up on action implementation?
 - What is the expected timeline for the EMR to be completed and made public after the end of an evaluation?
 - Who is responsible to monitor and lead the follow-up to EMRs and ensure that actions are implemented?
 - Who else is involved in EMR follow-up?
 - For how long does follow-up happen after an evaluation?
4. Are there set times in the year when the implementation of EMR actions is systematically tracked?
 - [If the answer is yes]: when and how do these systematic follow-ups to EMRs occur?
5. Is the progress of EMR action implementation systematically reported?
 - [If the answer is yes]:
 - How is this progress reported i.e. in what format?
 - Are there key indicators that are used to measure this progress?
 - How often is this progress reported and to whom?
6. Does your organisation use incentives to ensure EMR follow-up and implementation of planned actions?
 - Is this integrated into the performance management system of your organisation?
 - [If the answer is yes]: How?
7. What are, according to you, the most important obstacles in the follow-up of EMR action implementation?
8. Does the involvement of certain stakeholders improve the follow-up of EMR action implementation?
 - [If the answer is yes]: Which key stakeholders have a positive impact on this follow-up and how so?
9. Are there other approaches that you have found to be effective in ensuring the uptake of recommendations and learning from evaluations within your organisation?
 - [If the answer is yes]: Does your organisation have other tools or systems in place besides EMRs to document the use of evaluations?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me on this topic?


Annex C: Codes used in the data analysis

CODES

- Creation of a management response
 - Scope of MRs (centralised and decentralised evaluations)
 - Steps to create the MR
 - Obstacles/challenges for completing the MR
 - Strategies/incentives for completing the MR
 - Stakeholders involved in completing the MR
- Following-up on MR implementation
 - Follow-up on the MR implementation
 - Duration of the MR follow-up
 - Validation of MR implementation
 - Digital platforms to track MR implementation
 - Dashboards to display MR implementation
 - Strategies/incentives for MR implementation follow-up
 - Obstacles/challenges for MR implementation follow-up
 - Stakeholders involved in following up on the MR implementation
- Reporting on MR implementation
 - Indicators used to report on MR implementation
 - Governing bodies informed of MR implementation
 - Types of reports
 - Strategies/incentives for reporting on MR implementation
 - Obstacles/challenges for reporting on MR implementation
 - Stakeholders involved in reporting on MR implementation
- Evaluation Evidence Use beyond MRs
 - Indicators used to report on evaluation evidence beyond MRs
 - Strategies/incentives to promote evaluation evidence use



Annex D: Examples of MR templates

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: EMR Tracking Template						
 Evaluation Management Response (EMR) Tracking - General Info					Implementation Status - Legend: -Completed -Underway -Not started -Cancelled	
Evaluation Title:						
Link to internal EMR:						
Link to published EMR summary:						
Date of last BO review:						
Recommendations	Action items from Secretariat/Alliance partners	Business Owners (BO)			Follow-up on the implementation of actions	
		GAVI Lead	Partner Agencies (if applicable)	Expected Completion (MM/YY)	Implementation Status	Business Owners (BO) Review (please document justification why actions were not put in place)
Recommendation 1:						
Recommendation 2:						
Recommendation 3:						

Source: Gavi (2023). EMR ITracker (internal)



UNAIDS: MR Template

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE AND TRACKING	
Evaluation title	
Office/Region/Country	
Year of the report	
Overall response to the evaluation	<i>Please provide an assessment of the process and outcomes of the evaluation, the adequacy of the evidence and concurrence with findings. Were there limitations in the process or outcomes? Are there additional insights that are not reflected in the recommendations?</i>
Planned use of evaluation	<i>Please describe how the evaluation is intended to be used, focusing on how the findings will be considered in future plans and contribute to evidence-based decision making.</i>

Recommendations and responses						Tracking	
No	Recommendation	Management response	Actions planned	Responsible	Timeframe	Mid year (20xx)	End of year (20xx)
	<i>Please list the recommendations from the Evaluation Report</i>	<i>Please indicated if: - Accepted - Partially accepted (please indicate reasons) - Not accepted (please indicate reasons)</i>	<i>Please indicate the concrete actions planned by UNAIDS and partners to implement the recommendations</i>	<i>Please be specific and indicate who (Staff or Unit/office) in UNAIDS is responsible for the actions. If it is a joint response it should list who these are specifically</i>	<i>Please be specific and indicate a completion date (the overall timeframe is usually one year)</i>	<i>Please indicate status of implementation and actions taken. If an action is no longer relevant due to a changed context, please provide a justification and indicate if it should be cancelled or reformulated.</i>	<i>Please indicate status of implementation and actions taken</i>
1							
2							
3							
4							

Source: UNAIDS (2018). <https://www.unaids.org/en/whoweare/evaluation>

WHO: Management Response Template
Management Response

Evaluation Title	
Commissioning Unit	
Link to the evaluation	
Evaluation Plan	
Unit Responsible for providing the management response	
Overall Management Response:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Note whether evaluation overall is "ACCEPTED" "PARTIALLY ACCEPTED" or "NOT ACCEPTED"</i> - <i>Summary of the overall reactions of senior management to the recommendations</i> 	
Management Response Status	<i>In Progress</i>
Date	<i>[Indicate date of completion of the MR]</i>

WHO: Management Response Template (continued)

Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation 1				
<i>Copy paste the recommendation as formulated in the evaluation report</i>				
Management response	- [Indicate acceptance of recommendation:] <i>Accepted or Partially Accepted or Not Accepted</i> (Can add clarifying comments of acceptance of the Management Response for this recommendation and/or brief description, i.e. what WHO will do, by when and how in order to achieve the recommendation above; rationale for not accepting all or part of the recommendation and for modifying it, if relevant).			
Status	<i>Implemented OR In Progress OR Not Initiated</i>			
Key actions	Responsible	Timeline	Status	Comments
- indicate key action that will be undertaken to address the recommendations	- indicate unit(s) or person(s)	- by when it should be implemented	- implemented OR In progress OR Not initiated	- explanation as required, including any modification of the action proposed
- indicate key action that will be undertaken to address the recommendations	- indicate unit(s) or person(s)	- by when it should be implemented	- implemented OR In progress OR Not initiated	- explanation as required, including any modification of the action proposed
- indicate key action that will be undertaken to address the recommendations	- indicate unit(s) or person(s)	- by when it should be implemented	- implemented OR In progress OR Not initiated	- explanation as required, including any modification of the action proposed

Add as many lines as actions to be taken

Recommendation 2				
<i>Copy paste the recommendation as formulated in the evaluation report</i>				
Management response	- [Indicate acceptance of recommendation:] <i>Accepted or Partially Accepted or Not Accepted</i> (Can add clarifying comments of acceptance of the Management Response for this recommendation and/or brief description, i.e. what WHO will do, by when and how in order to achieve the recommendation above; rationale for not accepting all or part of the recommendation and for modifying it, if relevant).			
Status	<i>Implemented OR In Progress OR Not Initiated</i>			
Key actions	Responsible	Timeline	Status	Comments
- indicate key action that will be undertaken to address the recommendations	- indicate unit(s) or person(s)	- by when it should be implemented	- implemented OR In progress OR Not initiated	- explanation as required, including any modification of the action proposed
- indicate key action that will be undertaken to address the recommendations	- indicate unit(s) or person(s)	- by when it should be implemented	- implemented OR In progress OR Not initiated	- explanation as required, including any modification of the action proposed

To continue for each recommendation included in the evaluation report



World Bank Group (WBG) Independent Evaluation Group (IEG): MAR Reporting Template

C. Reporting Form

Fill out the info in the yellow boxes below for each recommendation, following the instructions immediately below. If you wish, you may instead use our “MAR FY23 Simplified Reporting Form” to report back, or use this “MAR FY23 Full Reporting Package” with the same form included, below (same reporting template without the surrounding text about your evaluation).

Column A: FY23 Updates on Activities + Changes in Behavior and Systems (up to ~1 page per recommendation – from all combined responses)

When responding, please mention the **specific activities and outputs** that have been undertaken to implement IEG’s recommendation (e.g. the different new/revised products, trainings, and guidance that were produced), as well as the **change in behavior and in systems** that have resulted from all of the above.

Column B: Evidence/Data Sources to Support the Updates.

It is essential to provide evidence/data – **quantitative and qualitative** - to support the update, e.g. changes in WB strategic focus, portfolio or even changes at project designs in line with the IEG recommendation. List your evidence. Where relevant, provide footnotes, links, separate files, etc. Work with your data / portfolio analysts.

Recommendation 1. Expand PCM platforms, guarantees, and disaster risk management products commensurate with project pipeline development (Bank Group).	
A. FY23 Updates on Activities, Outputs + Changes in Behavior and Systems (up to ~1 page per recommendation – from all combined responses)	B. Evidence/Data Sources (July 2022-June 2023)
Insert info here. For each para, please use bold topic sentences w/ the main highlight in the lead sentence and the rest of the para should have supporting facts and data (both qualitative and quantitative).	Insert sources (footnotes, lists, links, etc.) that you have mentioned under (A). If it’s easier, put the evidence in a separate file – or adjust the format of the reporting table.
Add any other notes you’d like us to know/have.	
Review the info about this recommendation, below. For evaluations that were part of the MAR in FY22, the FY22 info is provided below. IEG is seeking reporting on a cumulative basis.	

WBG – MAR FY23: Full Reporting Package (internal) Source: IEG Office.

FAO: Follow-Up Report Template

Accepted evaluation recommendations (a)	Action agreed in the management response (b)	Description of actions actually taken, or reasons for actions not taken (c)	MAR score (d) *	Impact of, or changes resulted from taken actions (e)
Recommendation 1	Summary of actions agreed	Short narrative		Short narrative
Recommendation 2	Summary of actions agreed	Short narrative		Short narrative
Recommendation 3	Summary of actions agreed	Short narrative		Short narrative

*1 – None: no action was taken to implement the recommendation

2 – Poor: plan and actions for implementation of the recommendation are at a very preliminary stage

3 – Inadequate: implementation of the recommendation is uneven and partial

4 – Adequate: implementation of the recommendation has progressed; there is no evidence yet of its results on the intended target

5 – Good: the recommendation has been fully implemented and there is some initial evidence of its impact on the intended target

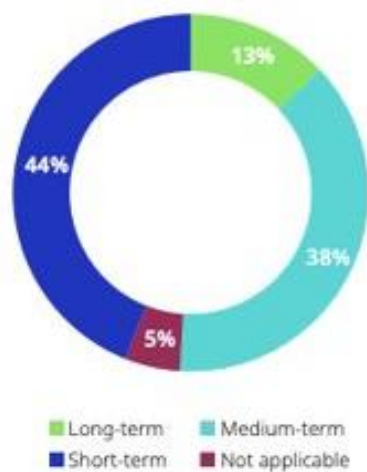
6 – Excellent: there is solid evidence that the recommendation has had a positive impact on its intended target

Source: FAO (2015). <https://www.fao.org/evaluation/resources/manuals-and-guidelines/en>

Annex E: Examples of quantitative indicators

ILO: Annual evaluation report 2021-22 (prepared by the Evaluation Office)

► **FIGURE 9. RECOMMENDATIONS BY TIME FRAME, 2021**



► **TABLE 3. STATUS OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSES BY REGIONS AND DEPARTMENTS, 2021**

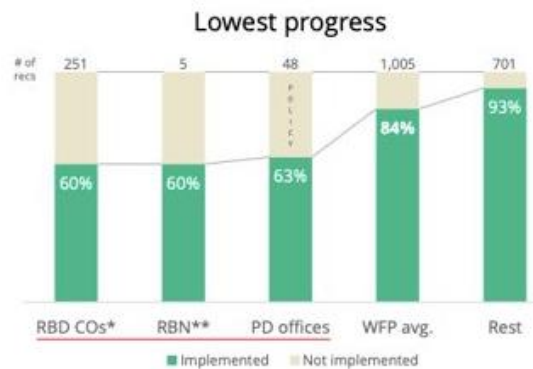
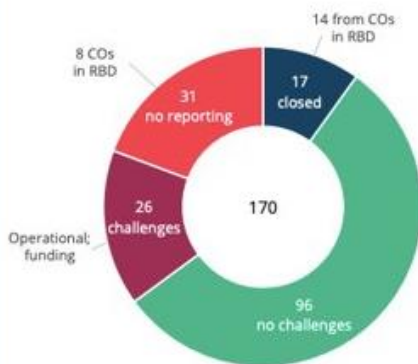
Administrative region or office/unit	Evaluation reports requiring management response (57)	Completed	Partially completed	No action planned	Action not yet taken	Rejected	Not addressed
	No. of recommendations						
Africa	115	49	32	2	21	3	8
Arab States	10	0	6	2	2	0	0
Asia and the Pacific	126	14	25	1	10	0	76
Europe and Central Asia	55	11	33	1	10	0	0
Latin America and the Caribbean	60	10	37	2	10	1	0
Subtotal for regions	366	84	133	8	53	4	84
EMPLOYMENT	36	13	18	2	3	0	0
GOVERNANCE	13	2	6	0	0	5	0
NORMES	6	5	1	0	0	0	0
SOCPRO	5	0	5	0	0	0	0
WORKQUALITY	5	2	3	0	0	0	0
Subtotal for offices/units	65	22	33	2	3	5	0
Grand total	431	106	166	10	56	9	84
Percentage		24.6%	38.5%	2.3%	13%	2%	19.48%
Total of completed and partially completed management responses: 63.1%							

Source: ILO (2022). [ILO – Annual evaluation report 2021-22](#)

WFP: Implementation status of evaluation recommendations (ISR) report for 2021 (prepared by the Corporate Planning & Performance Division)

KEY FINDINGS: NOT IMPLEMENTED RECOMMENDATIONS 2016–2021

- **17 were closed without implementation**, often due to limited funding or changed priorities
- **153 (15%) were open**, but implementation was often under way



* Country offices in the Western Africa region had the highest number (251) of recommendations to implement.
** The bureau for Eastern Africa had a much lower absolute number (5) of recommendations

Source: [WFP – Implementation status of evaluation recommendations \(ISR\) report for 2021](#)

WFP: Implementation status of evaluation recommendations (ISR) report for 2021 (prepared by the Corporate Planning & Performance Division)

KEY FINDINGS: IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITY

Key Findings

MOPAN and similar external reviews: Standards require that WFP systematically applies these priorities

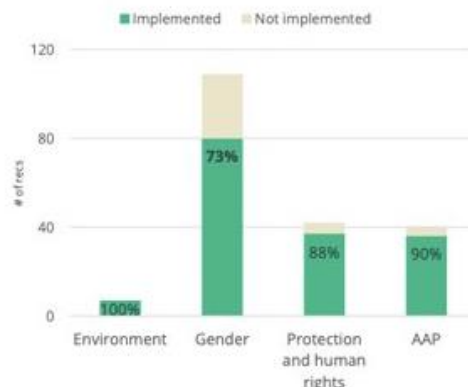
Of the **198** related recommendations, **81%** were implemented

Gender

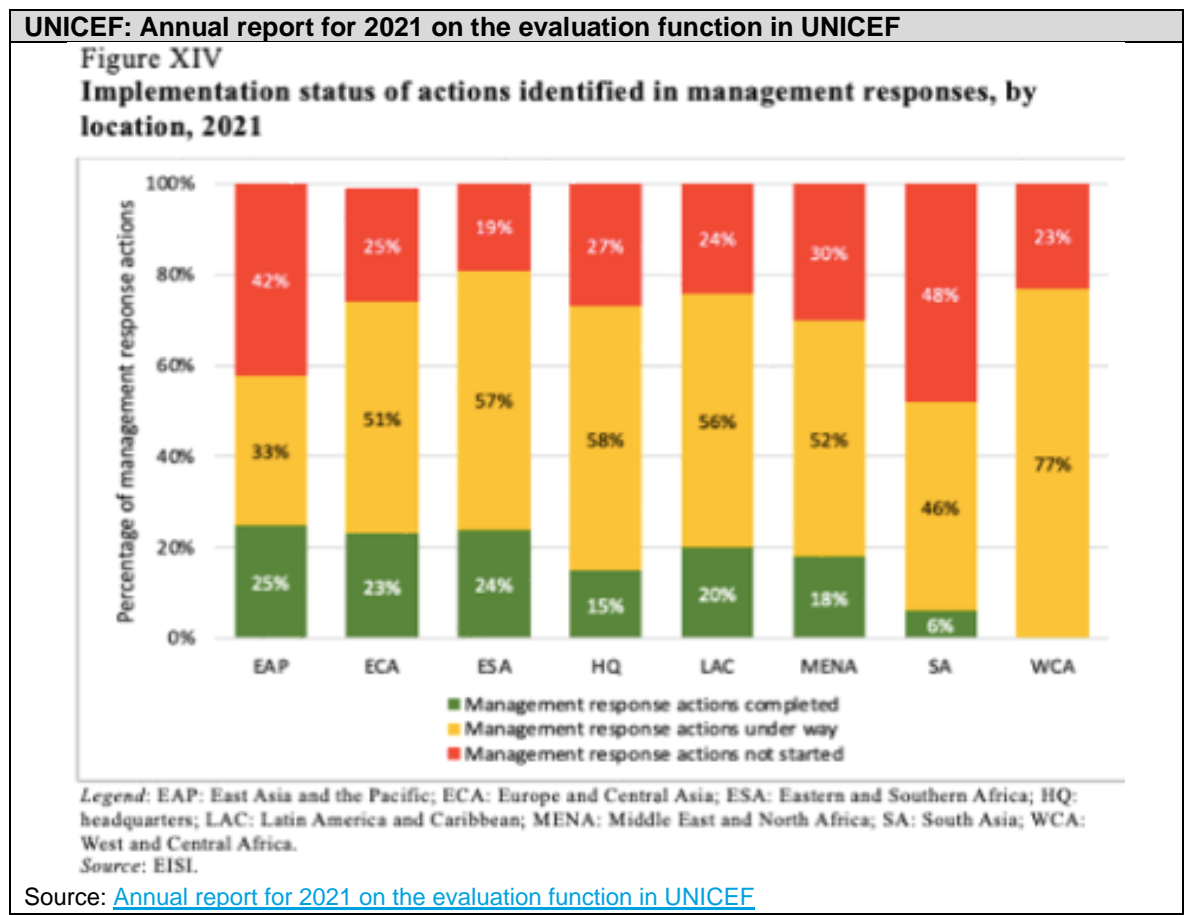
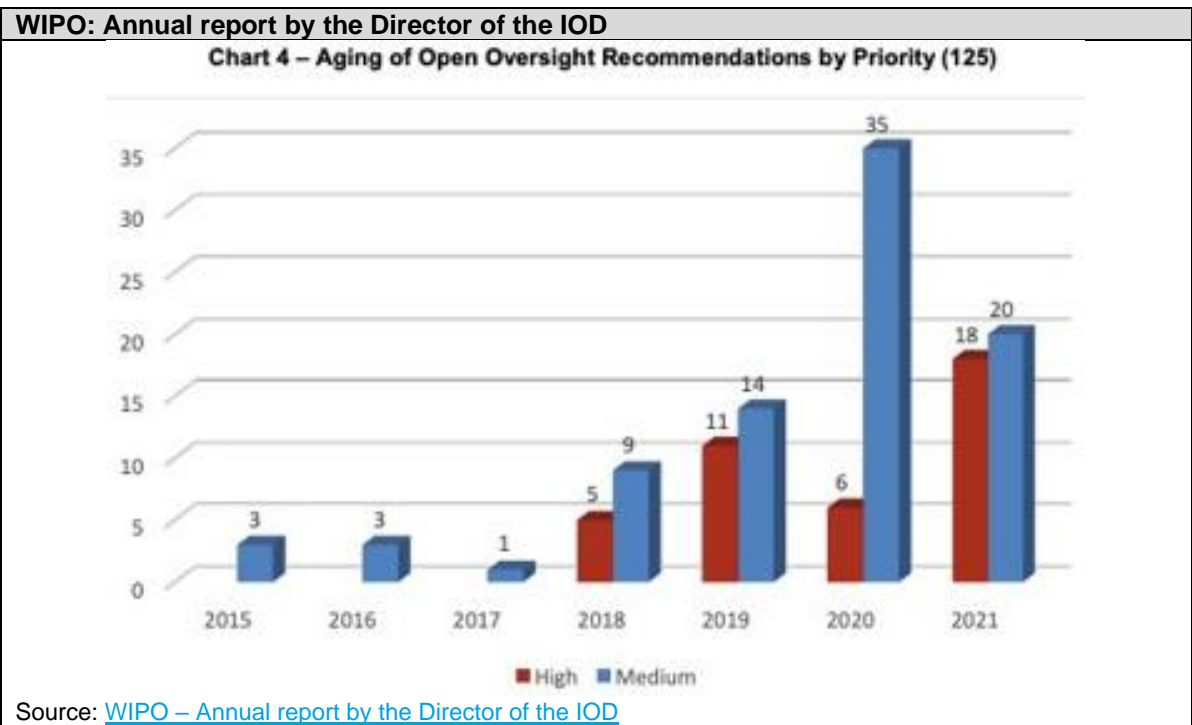
Most were about gender, with a slightly lower implementation rate at **73%**

WFP is better at implementing gender recommendations from **operations** (91%) and **activity** (84%) evaluations

By contrast, 63% of the gender recommendations from **thematic** evaluations were implemented, which are more **structural and systematic**



Source: [WFP – Implementation status of evaluation recommendations \(ISR\) report for 2021](#)



Annex F: Examples of dashboards

ILO: i-eval Discovery

About

i-eval Discovery provides public access to all planned and completed evaluation reports, in addition to their related recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, summaries and management responses.

Search

Search by country, theme, year, TC symbol, evaluation manager or by a general word search.

FIND

Date

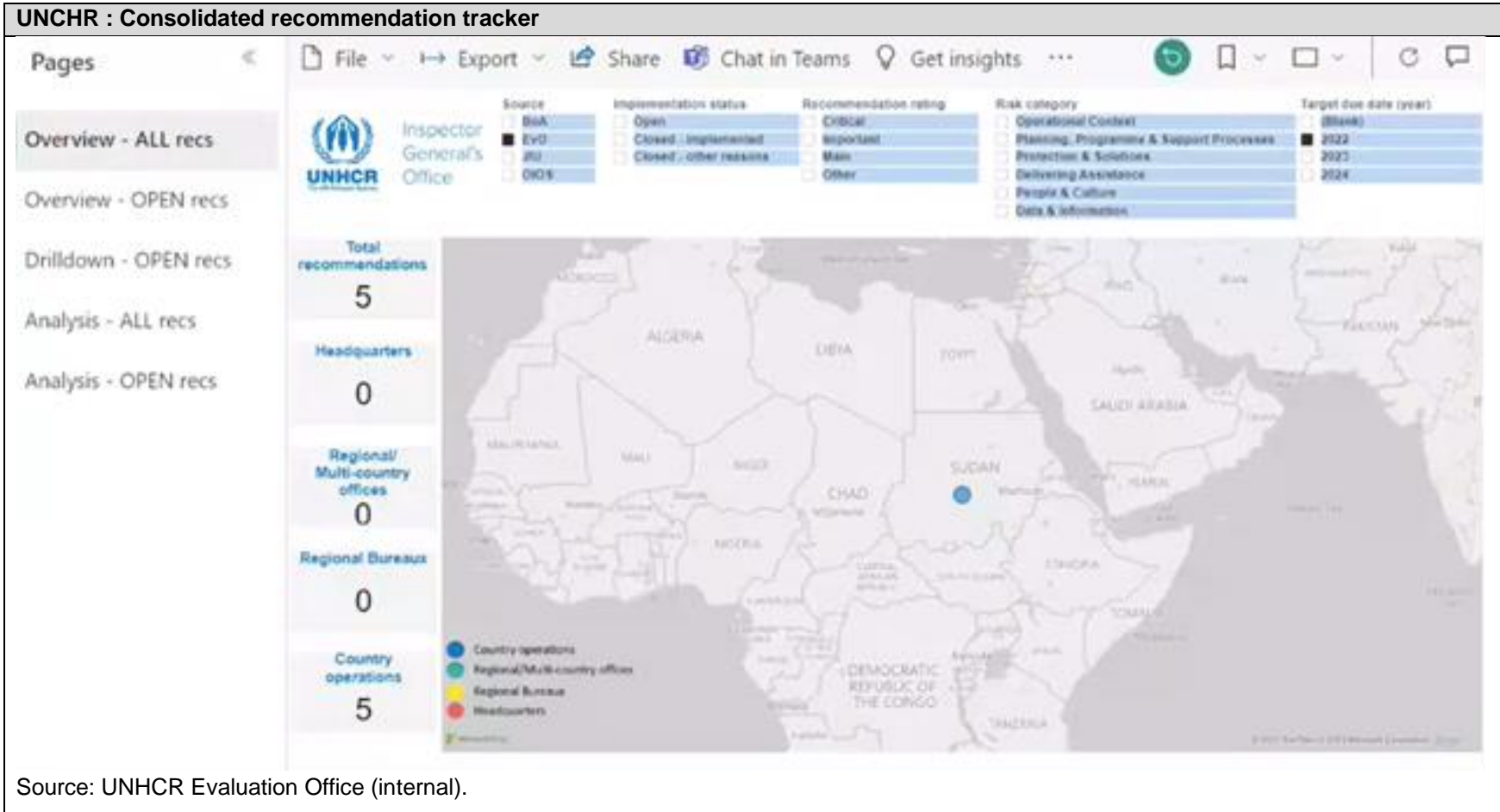
Select a range of years for the data

2012
2022

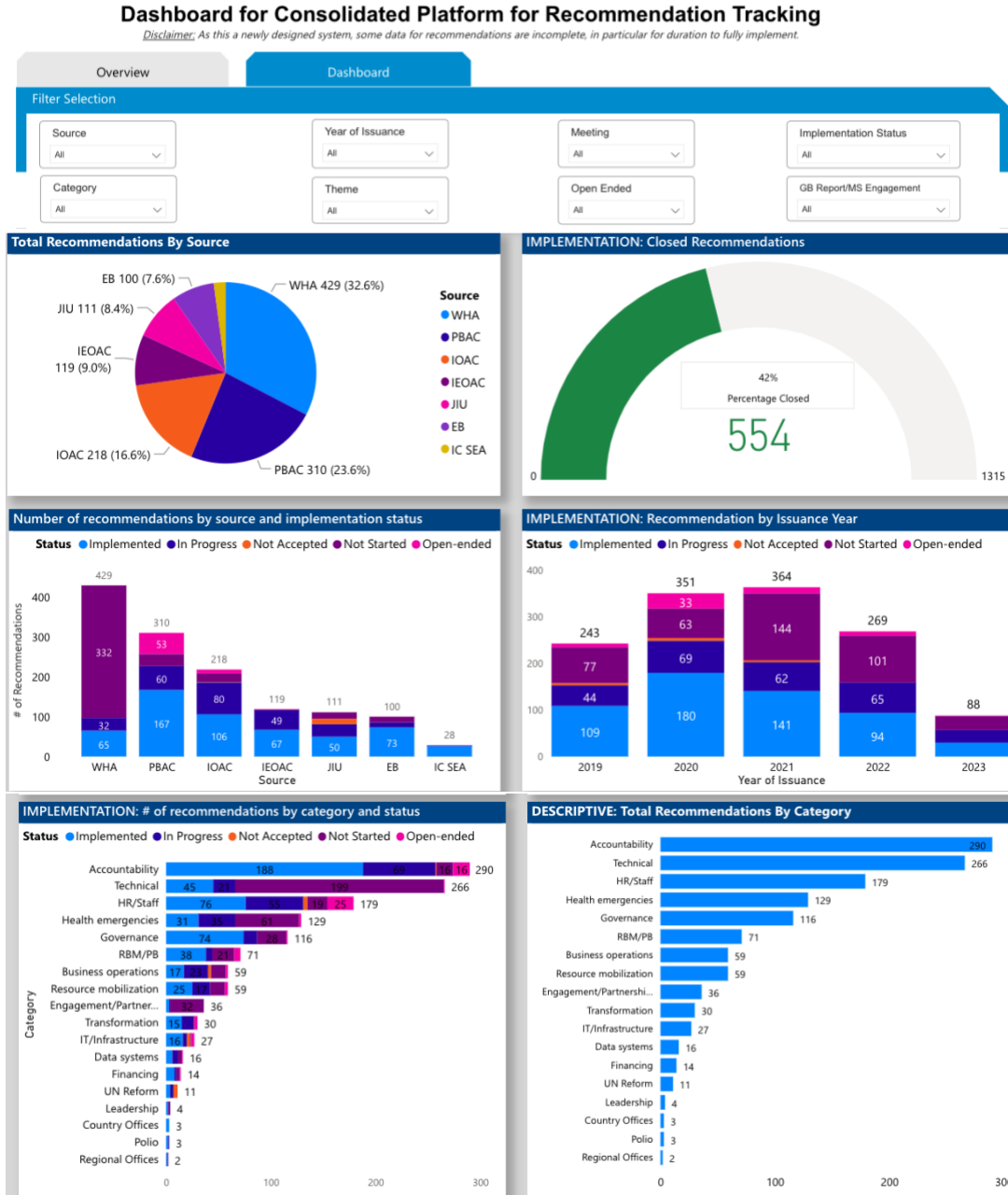
Map
List

Theme	Number of Recommendations
COVID	12
Child labour, forced ...	192
Constituents	109
Development	155
Employment	753
Enterprises	245

Source: <https://www.ilo.org/ievaldiscovery/>

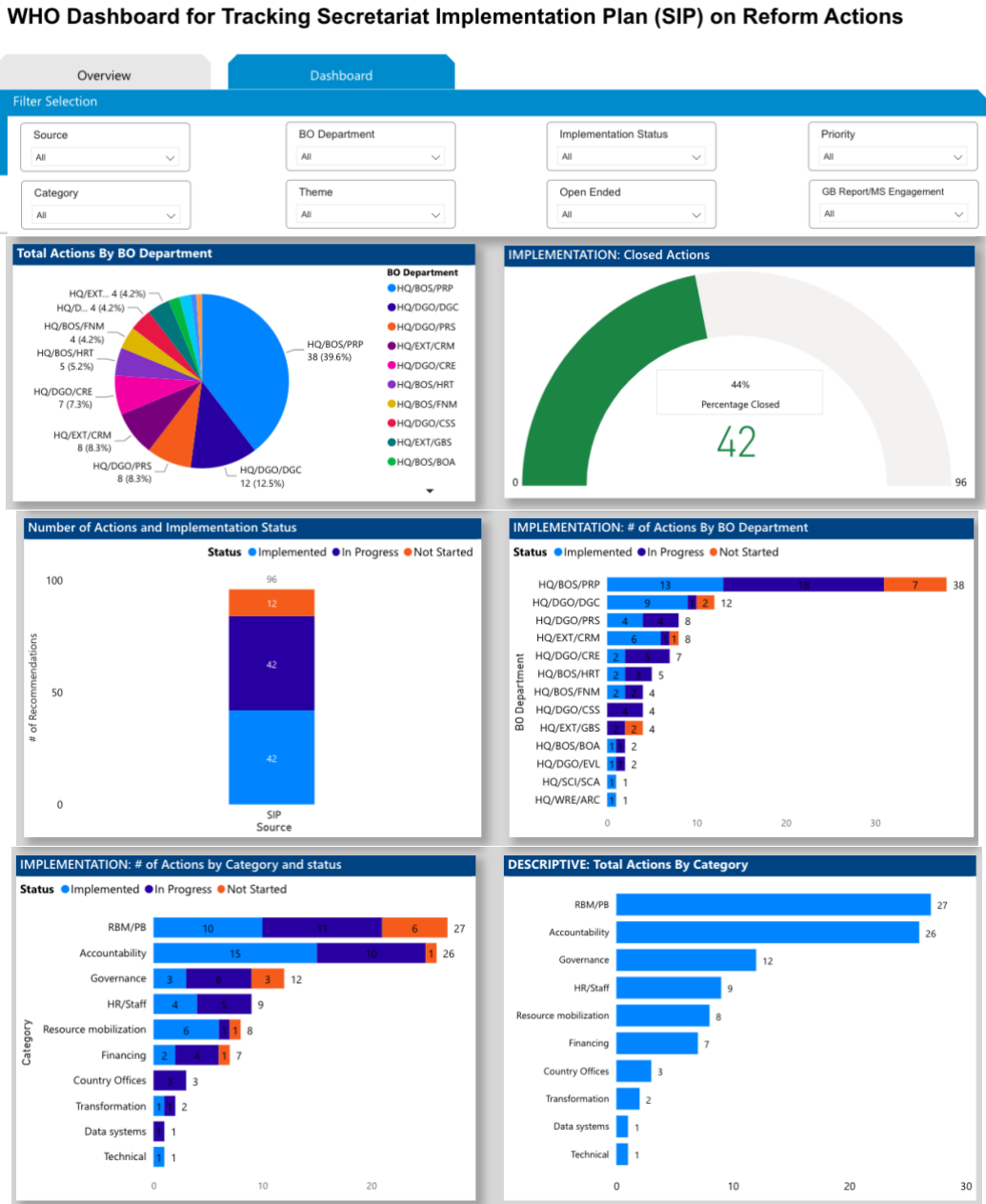


WHO: Dashboard for Consolidated Platform for Recommendation Tracking



Source: WHO (2023). <https://www.who.int/about/governance/member-states-portal/tracking-recommendations-from-the-consolidated-platform>

WHO: Tracking Secretariat Implementation Plan (SIP) actions



Source: WHO (2023). [https://www.who.int/about/governance/member-states-portal/tracking-secretariat-implementation-plan-\(sip\)-actions](https://www.who.int/about/governance/member-states-portal/tracking-secretariat-implementation-plan-(sip)-actions)